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(54) A device for providing stability to a utensil

(57) A device for providing stability to a utensil (1) comprises an elongate spigot (5) arranged to be inserted into an apertured support or the ground, and a retaining member (4) arranged to be secured to, or formed on, the base (2) of the utensil (1). The spigot (5) is releasably retainable by the retaining member (4) in either a first position in which the longitudinal axis (14) of the spigot (5) is generally perpendicular to the base (2) of the utensil (1) so as to enable the spigot (5) to be inserted into the apertured support or in the ground, or a second position in which the longitudinal axis (14) of the spigot (5) is substantially parallel to the base (2) so as to store the spigot (5) when not in use.

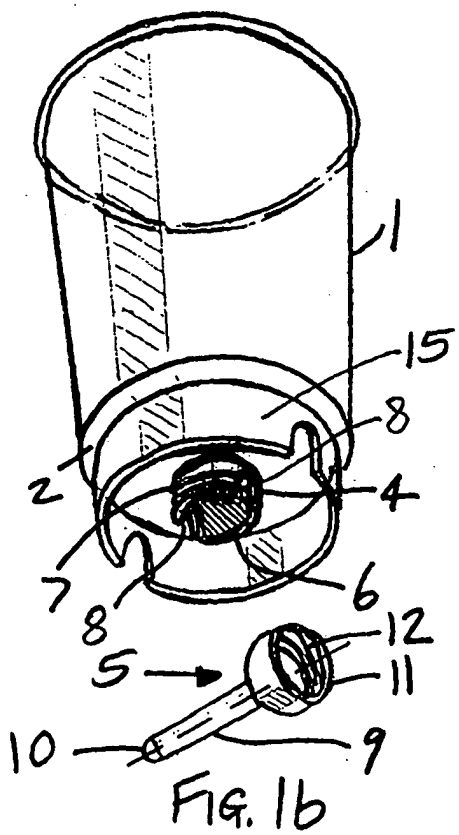

Fig. 1b

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Description

The present invention relates to a device for providing stability to a utensil, the utensil being, for example, any vessel, container or apparatus used to contain, store or hold materials, such as foodstuffs, liquids, candles, plants, ornaments or any other suitable products.

Most utensils of the type mentioned above have either a flat or otherwise shaped base which needs to be placed on a flat or correspondingly shaped surface so that the utensil can retain a stable, balanced and generally upright position. However, there are many locations in which a suitable surface upon which a utensil can be stably placed may not be available, for example outdoors in the garden, picnic areas or on the beach; in the swimming pool or the sea; or on a boat; or in a vehicle such as a motor car, coach, aircraft or train; or even indoors in the home, office or a hotel.

In order to mitigate this problem, it is known to provide a base of an object with a spiked attachment which can be inserted, for example, in the ground. However, the spike is either permanently attached to the base of the object, in which case the object cannot be stably placed on a flat surface, or the spike is detachable from the object and is then inverted and stored in an interior space of the object, in which case the object needs to be specifically designed to accommodate the unused spike.

It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved device for providing stability to a utensil.

According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a device for providing stability to a utensil, said device comprising an elongate member arranged to be inserted into an aperture of a support or the ground, and a member arranged to be secured to, or formed on, a surface of said utensil and to releasably retain said elongate member, characterised in that said elongate member is releasably retainable by said retaining member in either a first position in which the longitudinal axis of said elongate member is substantially perpendicular to said surface so as to enable said elongate member to be inserted into said aperture of said support or the ground, or a second position in which the longitudinal axis of said elongate member is substantially parallel to said surface so as to store said elongate member when said device is not in use.

Preferably, the elongate member is provided with an elongate portion and an end portion, the end portion being shaped so as to engage with the retaining member when the retaining member is in said first position. In one example, the end portion and the retaining member are formed with interengageable screw threads. The retaining member may have one or more walls extending generally perpendicular to the utensil surface and in which one or more apertures or recesses are formed for receiving the elongate portion when the elongate member is in the second position.

Alternatively, the retaining member may be shaped to form a slot into which the end portion of the elongate member slidably engages when the elongate member is in said first position and into which the elongate portion of the elongate member slidably engages when the elongate member is in said second position.

In a preferred arrangement, the retaining member is surrounded by a skirt within which the elongate member is contained when in said second position, In one particular example, the retaining member is formed on a base of the utensil and the skirt depends from the base.

According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided an assembly for providing stability to a utensil, said assembly comprising a device, as hereinabove described, and a support having one or more apertures for receiving the elongate member when in said first position. The support may be provided with means for releasable attachment to a stable surface or object.

According to a third aspect of the invention, there is provided a utensil having a device, as hereinabove described, the utensil comprising a vessel having one or more side walls and/or a base containing a coolant.

The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figures 1a to 1c show perspective views of one embodiment of the present invention;

Figures 2a to 2c show views of a second embodiment;

Figures 3a to 3c show views of a third embodiment;

Figures 4a to 4d show side views of different examples of a utensil for which the invention can be used;

Figures 5 to 12 show examples of various types of support which can be used with the present invention; and

Figure 13 shows a sectional view of another embodiment of a utensil to which the invention can be applied.

Referring first to Figures 1a to 1c, a utensil in the form of a drinking vessel 1 has a base 2 upon which a device 3 for providing stability thereto is provided. The device 3 comprises a retaining member 4 provided on the centre of the base 2 and an elongate spigot 5. The retaining member 4 has an annular wall 6 with screw thread 7 formed on its external surface and apertures or recesses 8 formed in the lower edge of the wall. The spigot 5 comprises an elongate portion 9 with a rounded end 10 and an annular end portion 11 provided with an internal screw thread 12 arranged to engage with screw thread 7.

Figure 1a shows the stabilising device in its use po-

sition in which longitudinal axis 14 of the spigot 5 is generally perpendicular to the base 2. In this position, the spigot 5 is screwed to the retaining member 4 and can be inserted into the ground or any suitable apertured support as will be described in more detail hereinbelow.

In Figure 1b, the spigot 5 has been unscrewed from the retaining member 4 and turned through 90° so that its longitudinal axis 14 is generally parallel to the base 2.

In Figure 1c, the spigot 5 is then inserted into and retained by the recesses 8, where it can be stored until it is next required to stabilise the vessel 1.

The vessel 1 is formed with an annular, downwardly-depending skirt 15 around the periphery of the base 2, within which the spigot 5 is contained when not in use. By this arrangement, the vessel 1 can still be stably placed on a flat surface, if required.

Figures 2a to 2c show a second embodiment, in which like parts have been labelled with like reference numerals with respect to Figures Ia to Ic. In this second embodiment, the screw threads 7 and 12 are formed respectively on the internal surface of the annular wall 6 of the retaining member 4 and on the external surface of the end portion 11 of the spigot 5. Additionally, the elongate portion 9 of the spigot 5 is a conical shape.

Figures 3a to 3c show a third embodiment, again in which like parts have been labelled with like reference numerals with respect to Figures 1a to 1c. In this third embodiment, the retaining member 4 is shaped so as to form a slot or channel 16 open on its underside so as to form an aperture 17. The end portion 11 of the spigot 5 is a rectangular-shaped block which slidably engages in the channel 16 with the elongate portion 9 extending through the aperture 17 in the retaining member 4, when the device is in use. When the stabilising device is not required, the elongate portion 9 slidably engages in the channel 16, as shown in Figure 3c.

Figures 4a to 4d show four different designs of drinking vessel to which the stabilising device could be applied, that is, a vessel with or without a handle, one having different diameters, and a stemmed type.

Figures 5 to 12 show different examples of a support which can be used, together with the stabilising device, to provide the required stability, depending on the individual conditions of the location where the vessel is required to be used. In each example shown in Figures 5 to 10 and 12, the Figure referenced "a" shows the component parts and the Figure referenced "b" shows the example in use. In these Figures 5 to 12, like parts are also labelled with like reference numerals.

Referring now to Figures 5a and 5b, the support 20 comprises a base 21 and an upstanding hollow part 22 into which the elongate portion 9 is inserted for stability. On the underside of the base 21, a first Velcro pad 23 can be secured, by adhesive or any other means, and a second Velcro pad 24, which co-operates with pad 23, can be secured to any appropriate surface. Alternatively, just the first Velcro pad 23 secured to the base 21 can be attached directly to soft furnishing materials to provide a secure fixing.

In Figures 6a and 6b, the support 20 comprises two spaced-apart circular members 25, 26 having aligning apertures 27, 28 in the centres thereof and the upper member 25 has a circular indentation 29 in its upper surface to retain the base of the vessel 1. The circular members 25, 26 are formed with an attachment part 30 containing a magnet 31, which can either be directly attached to a metallic surface, such as a fridge, or can be attached to another magnet 32 which may be secured to another surface by, for example, double-sided tape 33.

In Figures 7a and 7b, a suction pad 34 may be secured to the attachment part 30 and the suction pad can be stuck to any suitable surface.

In Figures 8a and 8b, the attachment part 30 is formed with a spring clip 35, the opening part of which is directed downwards, so that the support 20 can be secured to the top edge of any vertical surface, such as a chair back, fence, etc.

In Figures 9a and 9b, the spring clip 35 opens in a horizontal direction so that the support 20 can be secured to the edge of a horizontal surface, such as a table, chair seat, etc.

In Figures 10a and 10b, the spring clip 35 is a part-annular configuration, so as to grip around a vertical pole. Alternatively, the clip 35 could be turned through 90° so as to grip a horizontal pole.

In Figure 11, the support is in the form of a tray 36 having a plurality of apertures 37, into which the elongate portion 9 of the spigot 5 is inserted and around which indentations 38 are formed to retain the base of the vessel 1.

In Figures 12a and 12b, the support 20 comprises an inflatable ring 39 having a valve 40 and shaped with a central cavity 41 having an aperture 42, into which the elongate portion 9 and base 2 of the vessel 1 are inserted. The inflated ring can then be floated on water.

Figure 13 shows another embodiment of a vessel or other container which can be used with a stability device (not shown) in accordance with the present invention. The vessel 1 has doubled-walled sides 43 and base 44 forming a cavity within which a coolant 45 is permanently contained. The coolant 45 may be a cooling gel, liquid, agent or any other suitable means by which the contents of the vessel can remain cool for a period of time.

The components of the stabilising device and the support may be made from plastics material, such as ABS, polypropylene, etc, or wood, glass metal, rubber or any other suitable material.

Whilst specific embodiments have been described, it will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that other modifications may be made without departure from the scope of the accompanying claims. For example, the retaining member 4 and the skirt 15 may be integrally formed with the vessel 1 or they may form a separate unit intended to be secured either permanently or

temporarily to any suitable utensil. Furthermore, although the utensil has been illustrated as a drinking vessel, it may take the form of, for example, any glassware, jug, flask, plate, dish, candle holder, bowl, or bottle holder. The support may also be in any suitable form for receiving the spigot and providing stability and balance to the utensil. Alternatively, a support may not be used and the spigot can be inserted directly into the ground.

Claims

1. A device for providing stability to a utensil (1), said device comprising an elongate member (5) arranged to be inserted into an aperture of a support (2) or the ground and a member (4) arranged to be secured to, or formed on, a surface (2) of said utensil (1) and to releasably retain said elongate member (5), characterised in that said elongate member (5) is releasably retainable by said retaining member (4) in either a first position in which the longitudinal axis (14) of said elongate member (5) is substantially perpendicular to said surface (2) so as to enable said elongate member (5) to be inserted into said aperture of said support (20) or the ground, or a second position in which the longitudinal axis (14) of said elongate member (5) is substantially parallel to said surface (2) so as to store said elongate member (5) when said device is not in use.

2. A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said elongate member (5) is provided with an elongate portion (9) and an end portion (11), said end portion (11) being shaped so as to engage with said retaining member (4) when said elongate member (5) is in said first position.

3. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein said end portion (11) and said retaining member (4) are formed with interengageable screw threads (7,12).

4. A device as claimed in claim 2 or 3, wherein said retaining member (4) has one or more walls (6) extending generally perpendicular to said utensil surface (2) and in which one or more apertures or recesses (8) are formed for receiving said elongate portion (9) when said elongate member (5) is in said second position.

5. A device as claimed in claim 2, wherein said retaining member (4) is shaped to form a channel (16) into which said end portion (11) slidably engages when said elongate member (5) is in said first position and into which said elongate portion (9) slidably engages when said elongate member (5) is in said second position.

6. A device as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said retaining member (4) is surrounded by a skirt (15) within which said elongate member (5) is contained when in said second position.

7. A device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the retaining member (4) is formed on a base (2) of said utensil (1) and said skirt (15) depends from said base (2).

8. An assembly for providing stability to a utensil (1), said assembly comprising a device, as claimed in any preceding claim, and a support (20) having one or more apertures (27) for receiving said elongate member (5) when in said first position.

9. An assembly as claimed in claim 9, wherein said support (20) is provided with means (30) for releasable attachment to a stable surface or object.

10. A utensil having a device for providing stability thereto, as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, said utensil (1) comprising a container having one or more side walls (43) and/or a base (44) containing a coolant (45).

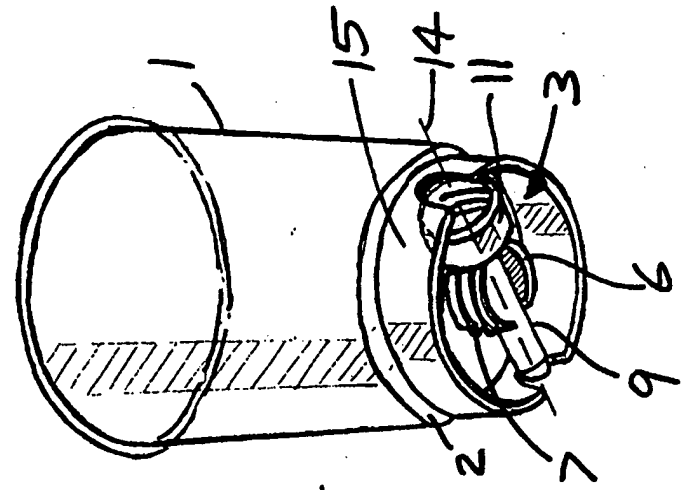


Fig. 1c

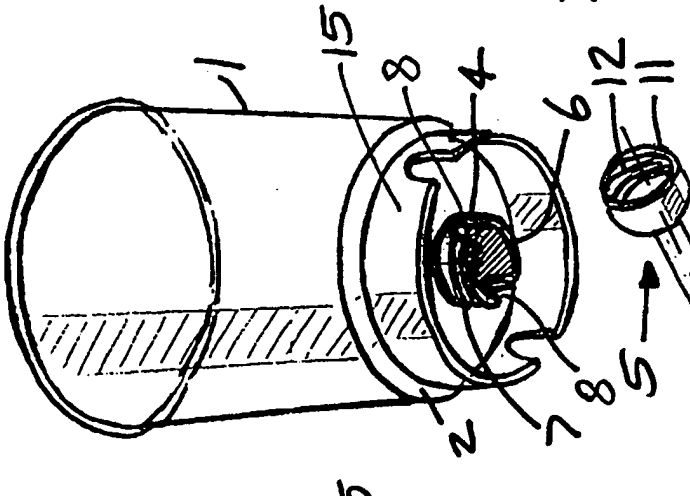


Fig. 1b

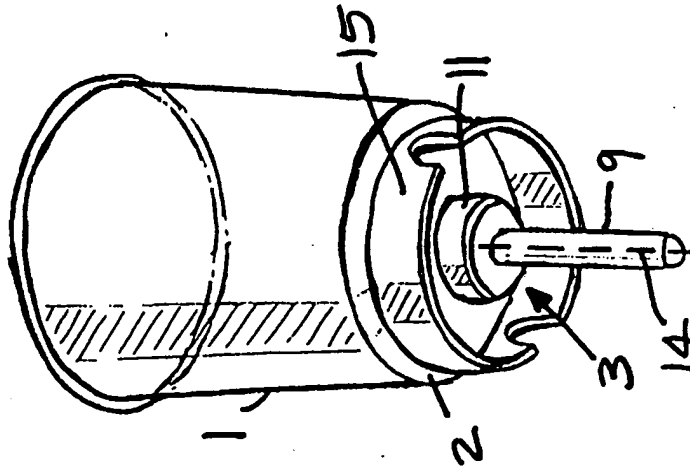


Fig. 1a

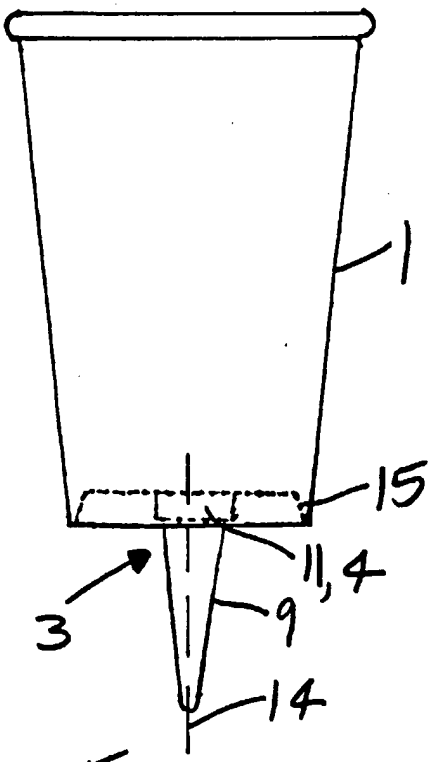


FIG. 2a

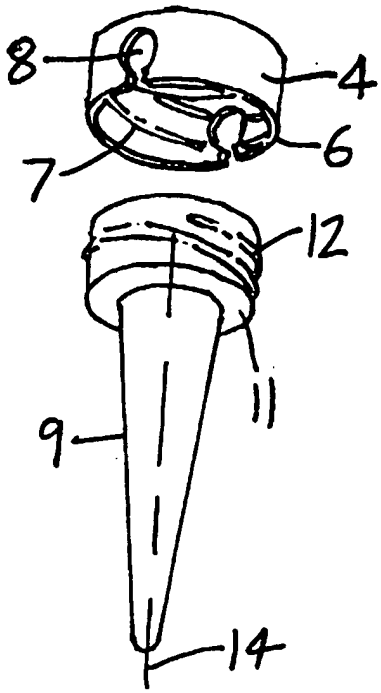


FIG. 2b

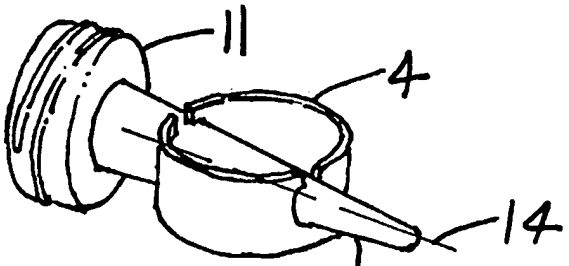


FIG. 2c

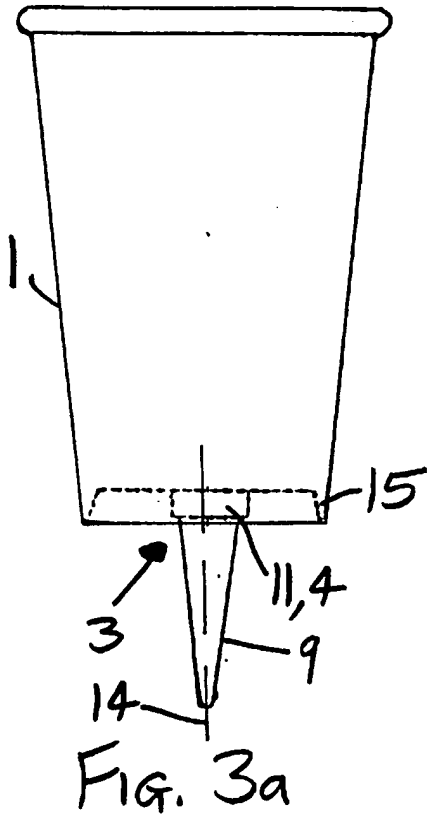


FIG. 3a

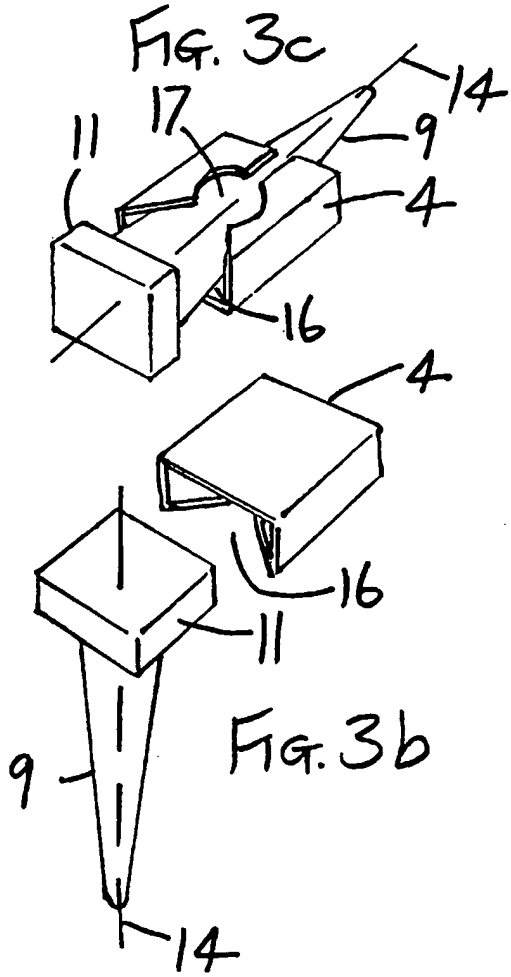


FIG. 3b

FIG. 3c

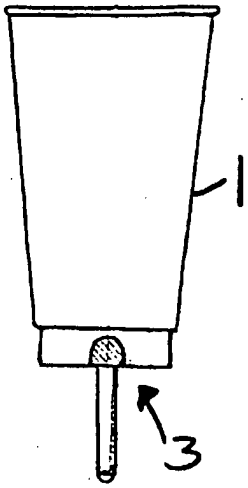


FIG. 4a

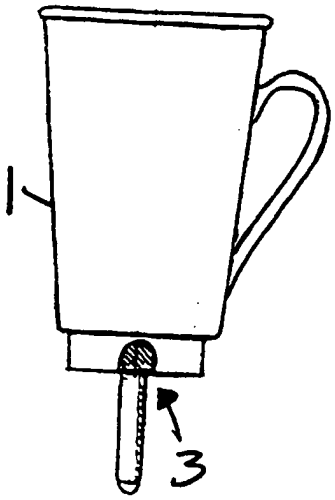


FIG. 4b

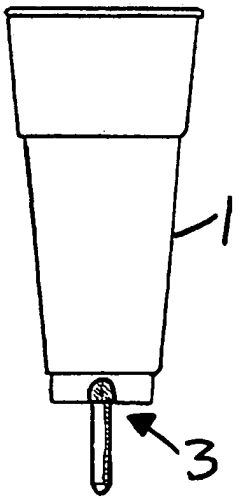


FIG. 4c

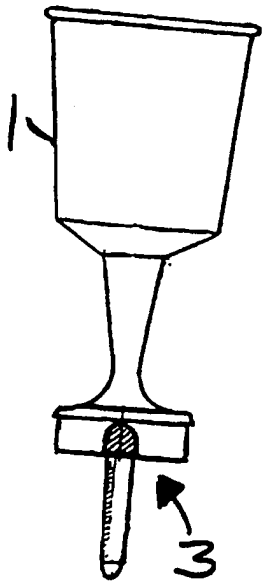
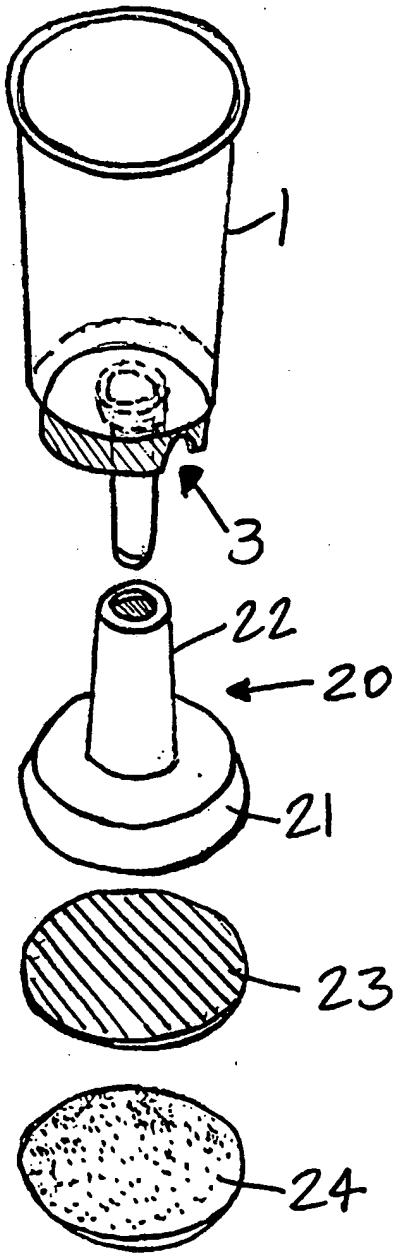


FIG. 4d

FIG. 5a



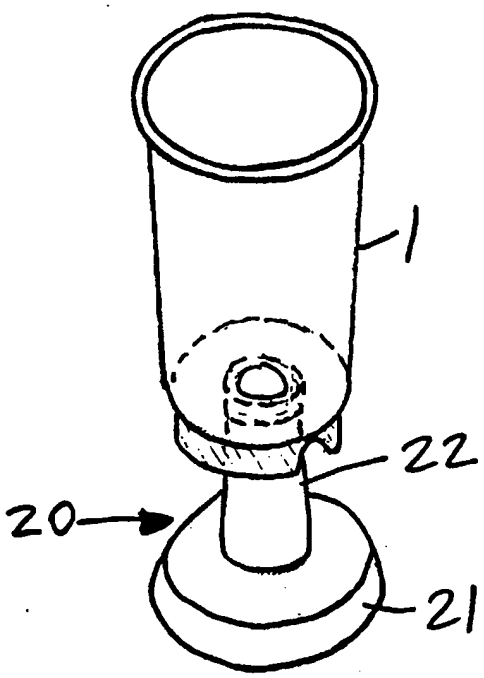


FIG. 5b

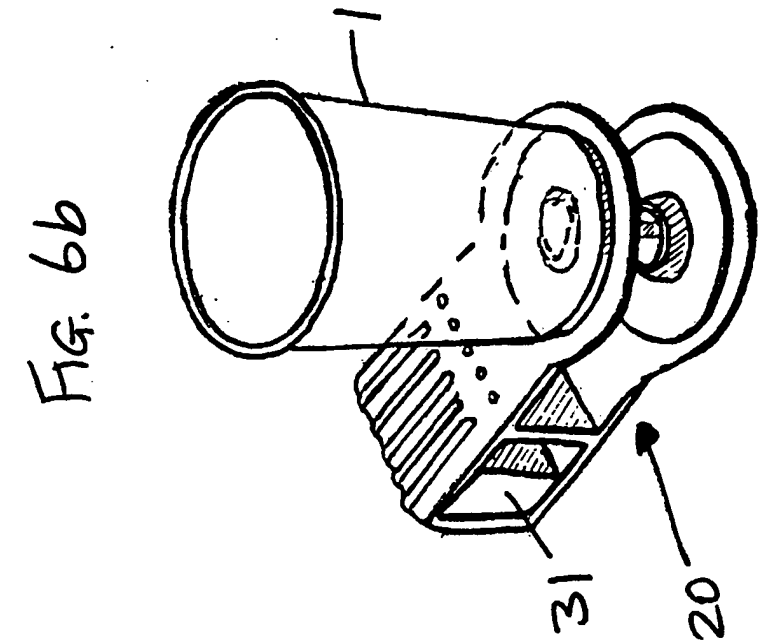


FIG. 6b

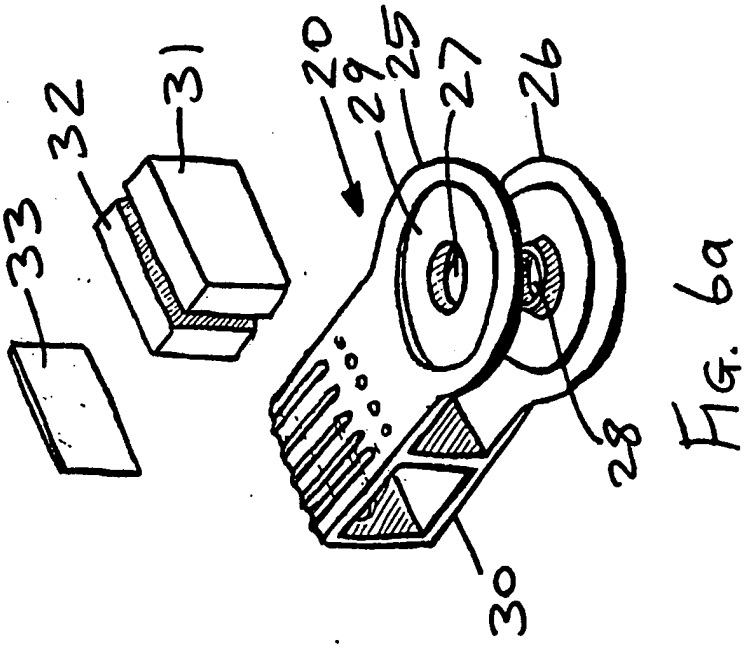


FIG. 6a

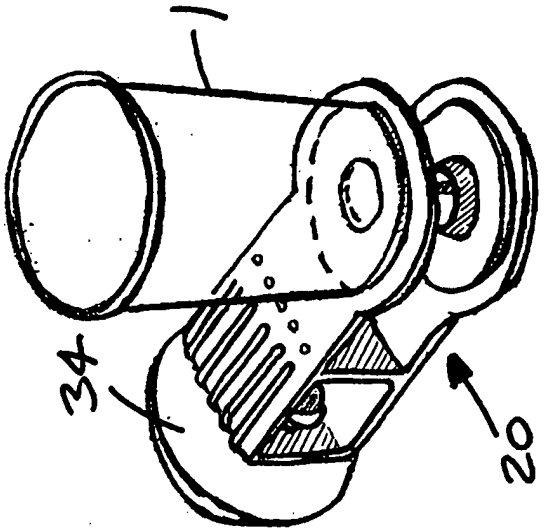


FIG. 7b

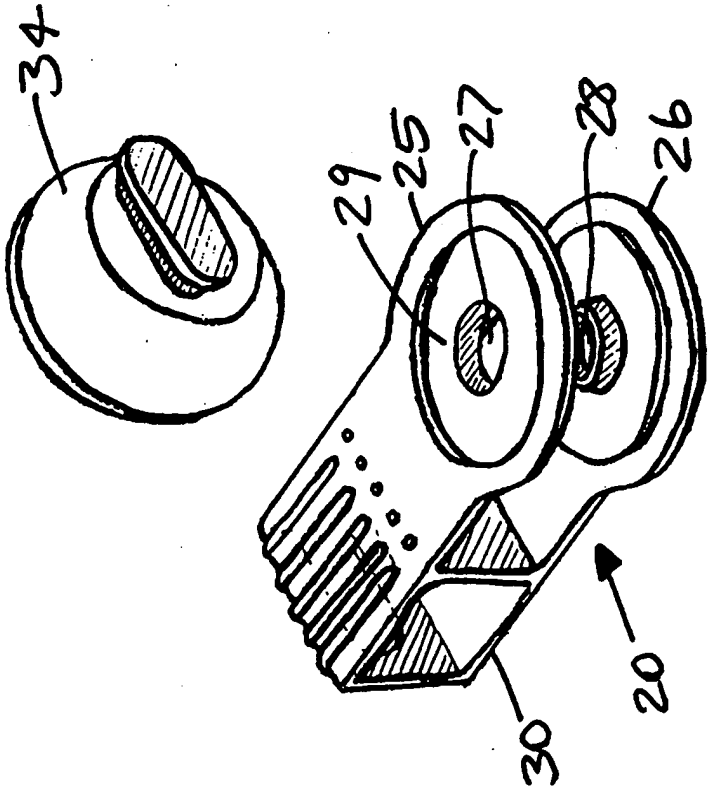


FIG. 7a

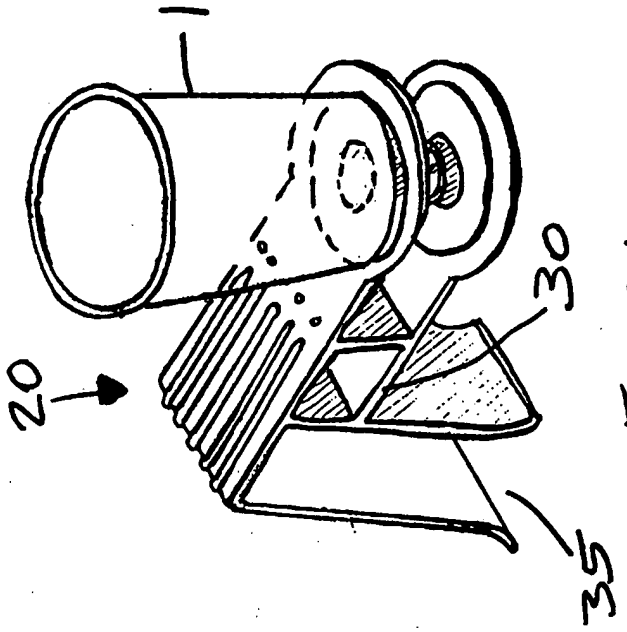


Fig. 8b

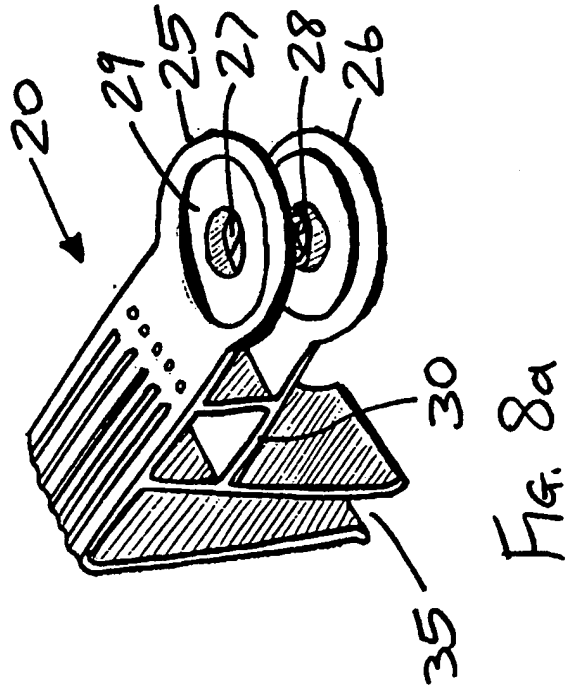


Fig. 8a

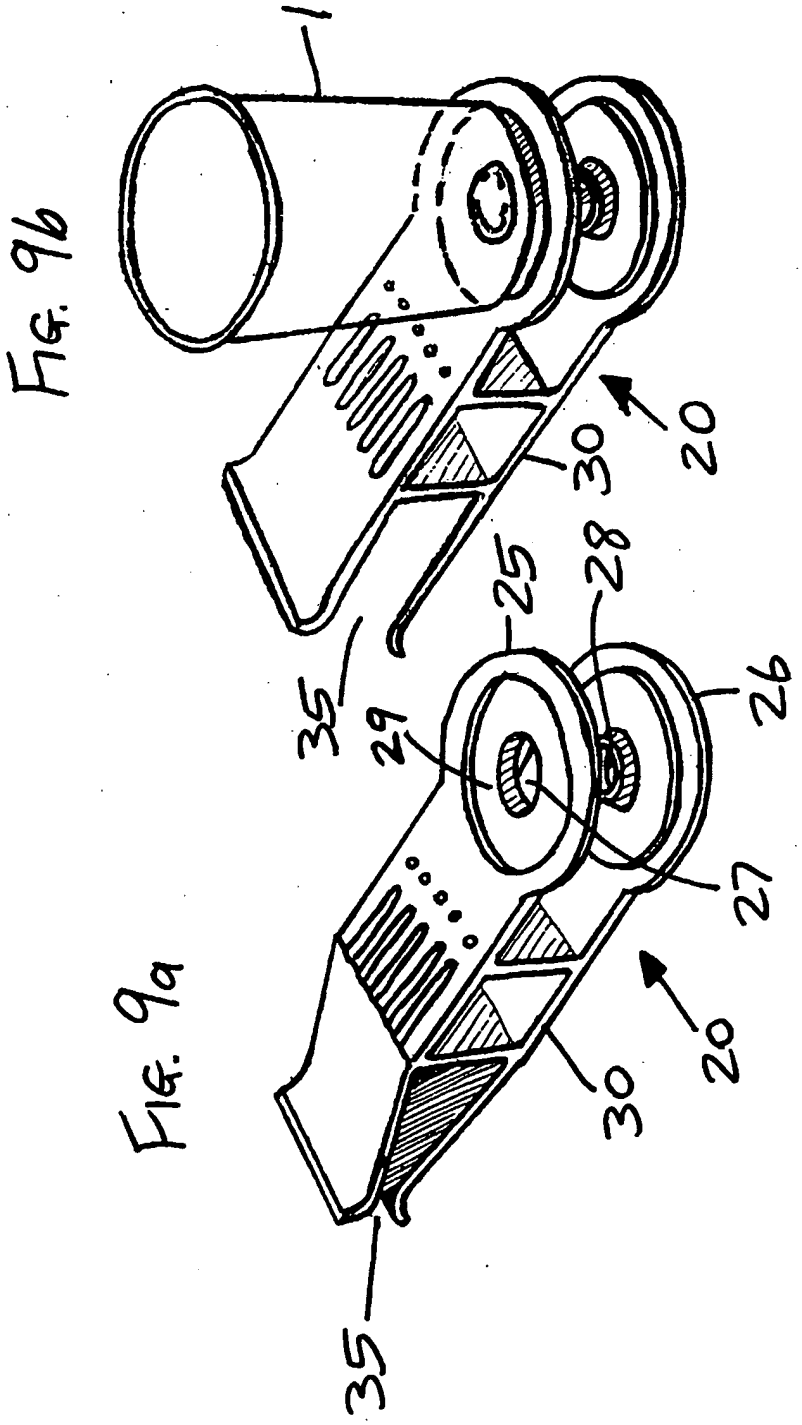


Fig. 9b

Fig. 9a

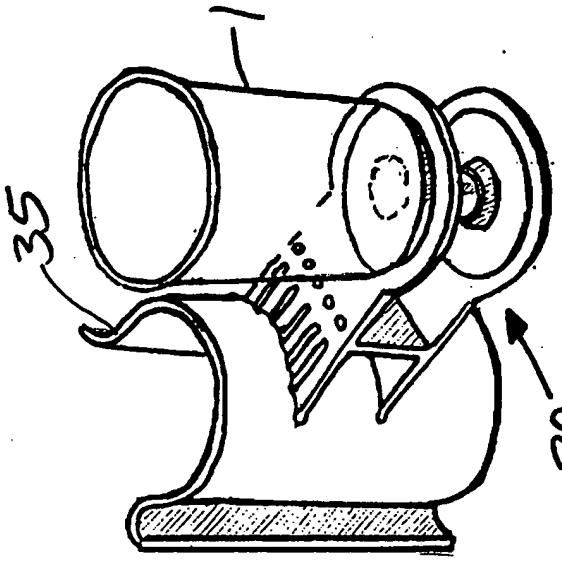


FIG. 10b

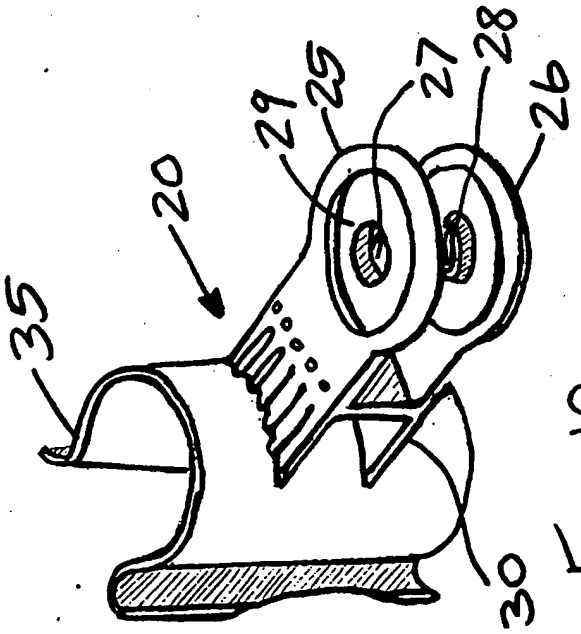
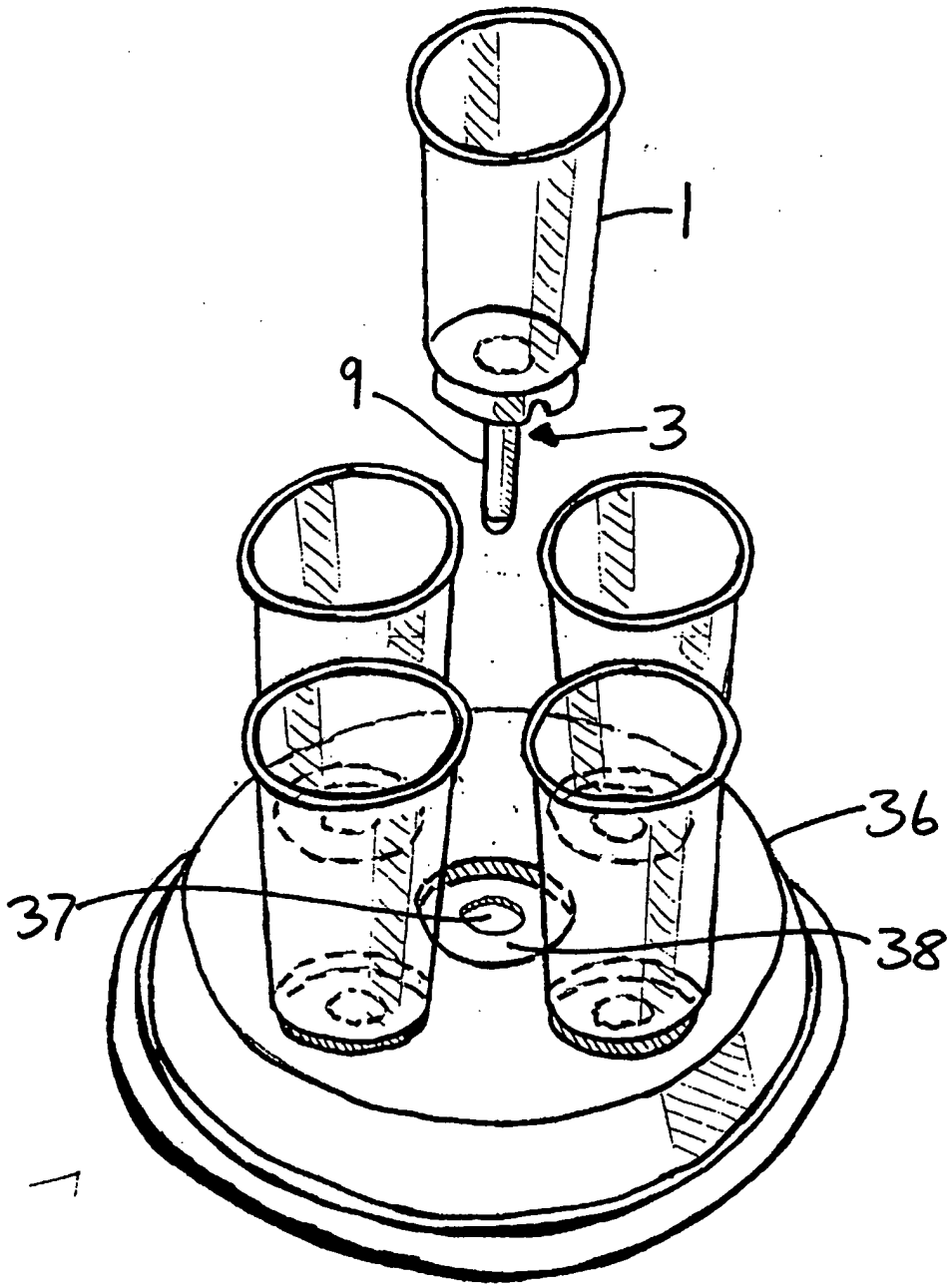


FIG. 10a

FIG. 11



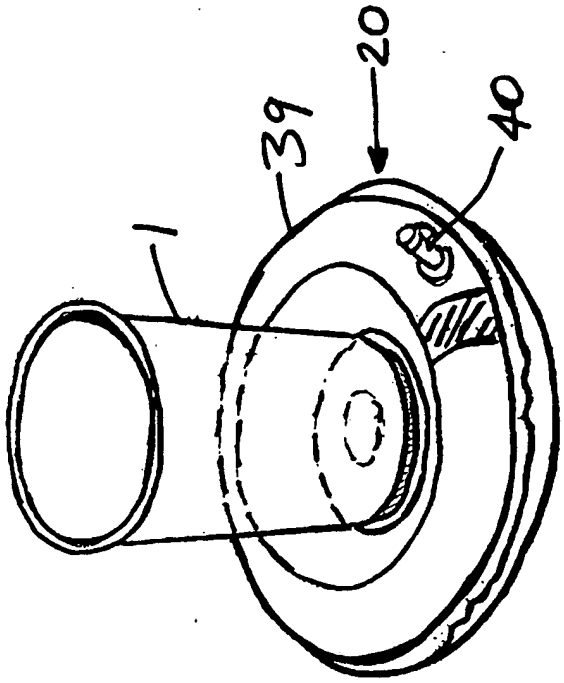


Fig. 12b

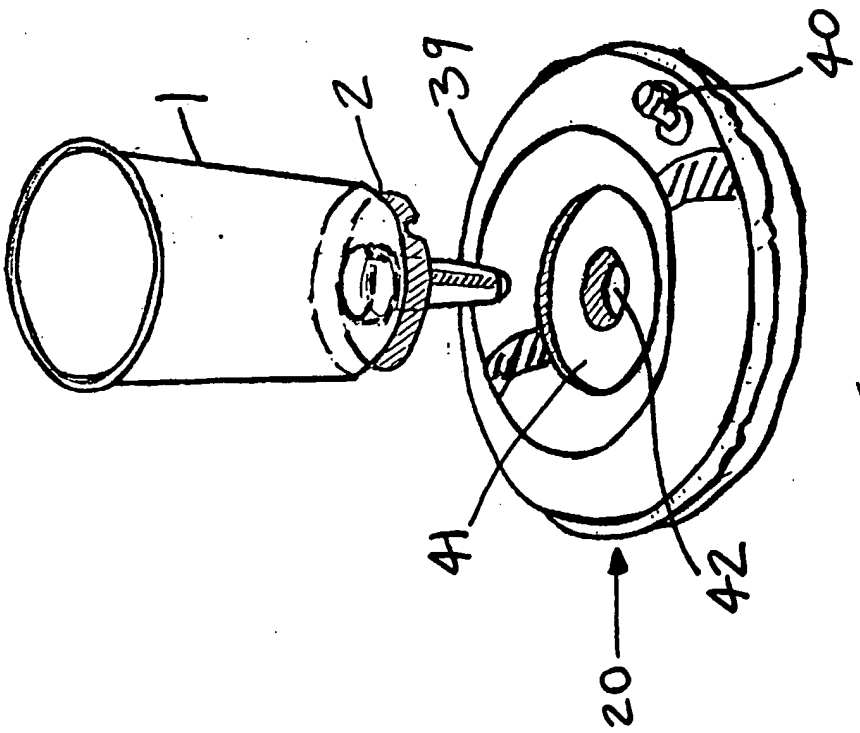


Fig. 12a

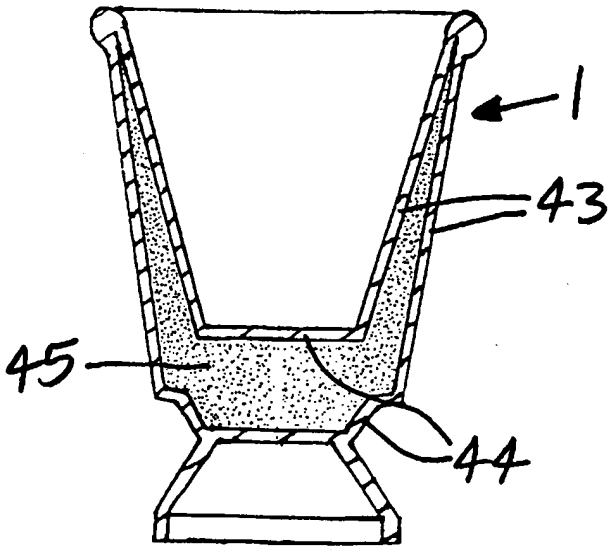


FIG. 13